

liquid crystal display device or CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) or the like, for displaying various types of information in text and images. A HDD (Hard Disk Drive) 21 drives hard disks, and records programs to be executed by the CPU 11 and information therein and reproduces the programs and information therefrom.

A drive 22 reads out data or programs recorded on magnetic disks 41, optical disks (including CDs) 42, magneto-optical disks 43, or semiconductor memory 44, which are mounted as necessary, and supplies the data or programs to RAM 13 which is connected thereto via an interface 17, the external bus 16, the bridge 15, and the host bus 14.

The portable device 5-1 is connected to the USB port 23-1 via a USB cable. The USB port 23-1 outputs to the portable device 5-1 data (e.g., contents, commands for the portable device 5-1, and so forth) supplied from the CPU 11, RAM 13, or HDD 21, to the respective removable disk devices 3-1 through 3-3, via the interface 17, external bus 16, bridge 15, or host bus 14.

The portable device 5-2 is connected to the USB port 23-2 via a USB cable. The USB port 23-2 outputs to the portable device 5-2 data (e.g., contents, commands for the portable device 5-2, and so forth) supplied from the CPU 11, RAM 13, or HDD 21, to the respective removable disk devices 3-1 through 3-3, via the interface 17, external bus 16,

bridge 15, or host bus 14.

The portable device 5-3 is connected to the USB port 23-3 via a USB cable. The USB port 23-3 outputs to the portable device 5-3 data (e.g., contents, commands for the portable device 5-3, and so forth) supplied from the CPU 11, RAM 13, or HDD 21, to the respective removable disk devices 3-1 through 3-3, via the interface 17, external bus 16, bridge 15, or host bus 14.

A speaker 24 outputs predetermined audio corresponding to contents, based on audio signals supplied from the interface 17.

The keyboard 18, mouse 19, display 20, HDD 21, drive 22, USB ports 23-1 through 23-3, and speaker 24, are connected to the interface 17, and the interface 17 is connected to the CPU 11 via the external bus 16, bridge 15, and host bus 14.

A communication unit 25 has a network 2 connected thereto, for storing data supplied from the CPU 11 or HDD 21 (e.g., a request for transmitting contents) in packets of a predetermined format which are then transmitted via the network 2, and also for outputting data (e.g., contents, etc.) stored in packets received via the network 2 to the CPU 11, RAM 13, or HDD 21.

A memory card interface 26 reads out contents and corresponding rights information stored in the memory card 9

mounted to the personal computer 1, supplies the contents and the rights information to the CPU 11, RAM 13, or HDD 21, and also stores data supplied from the CPU 11, RAM 13, or HDD 21 to the memory card 9.

The communication unit 25 and the memory card interface 26 are connected to the CPU 11 via the external bus 16, bridge 15, and host bus 14.

In the following description, the USB ports 23-1 through 23-3 will be referred to simply as USB port 23, unless there is the need to distinguish between the individual USB ports 23-1 through 23-3.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram illustrating the functions of the personal computer 1 realized by the CPU 11 executing a contents managing program. A GUI (Graphical User Interface) unit 101, in response to operation of the keyboard 18 or mouse 19 by the user, supplies a music piece title corresponding to contents which the user desires or a file name of a file where the contents are stored, to a music piece managing unit 104, and also requests registration of data corresponding to the contents, to a database 107.

The GUI unit 101 obtains data relating to the contents, e.g., music piece ID, music piece title, or artist name, from the database 107 via the music piece managing unit 104, and music piece title or rights information and the like from the rights information storing unit 105, and displays